

Charles Lavalie House
203 East Church Street
Pensacola
Escambia County
Florida

HABS No. FLA-199

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

CHARLES LAVALLE HOUSE

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Location: 203 East Church Street, Pensacola, Escambia County, Florida. This house, which is located at the south-east corner of Barracks and East Church Streets, was formerly located at 111 West Government Street near the southwest corner of South Baylen and West Government Streets on Lot 80.

Present Owner: Historic Pensacola Preservation Board of Trustees

Present Occupant: Vacant

Present Use: Future house museum

Statement of Significance: This building is an excellent example of a raised wood frame cottage typical of the Gulf coast area. The building is under restoration, and it contains much structural and finish materials of the early nineteenth century. Particularly significant is the brick nogging in all the walls and partitions, the mortise and tenon joinery and an unusual garret stairway.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: During the Spanish occupation of Pensacola Baron Carondelet granted Lot 80 and other properties to Panton, Leslie and Company on April 16, 1796. The trading company sold all of that property to Charles (Carlos) Lavalle in 1803 for \$600.

In the twelve years that Lavalle owned the lots he seems to have made substantial improvements when he sold only Lot 80 to James F. Wilson for \$1500 in 1815. The sale included not only the lot but also the house located on it and the furnishings.

Josephine Graupera purchased the lot and all the buildings constructed on it for \$2,257.00 in 1822. Henry Ahrens became the owner in 1838 and sold to Henry Ingraham in 1853. Joseph Forsyth bought the property from Ingraham in 1859 and owned it until 1866 when Augusta E. Maxwell purchased the property. John Brosnahan bought the property from Maxwell one year later. Rudolf Pfeiffer bought Lot 80 from Brosnahan in 1893. It was deeded to

Cora Dillard by 1943 when she, in turn, sold the property to Fred and Ernest Lindenberg. The Historic Pensacola Preservation Board, then the Pensacola Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission, acquired the house from F. Earle Adkinson in 1969 and moved it to its present site within the Historic District of Pensacola. HABS FLA 17-PENSA 13 -

2. Date of erection: It appears that the house was probably constructed by Charles Lavalle after he purchased the property in 1803 for less than \$600 and before he sold it in 1815 for \$1500.
 3. Architect: Unknown
 4. Original plans and construction information: None known
 5. Alterations and additions: An early rear addition, the width of the main structure with a salt box roof, was demolished when the house was moved and has not been reconstructed.
 6. Important old views: None known
- B. Historic Events and Persons Connected with the Structure: Charles Lavalle was a Pensacola builder and land owner. In 1807 he and his business partner, Mariana Bonifay, purchased the Juan Ruby brick yard which may account for the extensive use of brick nogging in the exterior and interior walls of the house. Lavalle probably never resided in the house as he is generally known to have purchased lots, built houses and sold either or both for a profit. Lavalle, also a landlord, possibly built the 111 West Government Street house as a tenement.
- C. Sources of Information:
1. Primary and unpublished sources: Court House records, Clerk of Courts Office, Escambia County Court House, Pensacola, Florida.
 2. Secondary and published sources: None known

Prepared by Linda V. Ellsworth
Assistant Historian
Historic Pensacola
Preservation Board
August 11, 1970

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

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- A. General Description: This one-and-a-half story house is rectangular in plan and has an inset porch at the four-bay north (street) elevation. The four room structure had a salt box roofed building at the rear which accommodated additional spaces. The condition of the fabric is good.
- B. Description of Exterior:
1. Overall dimensions: The house measures 32'-4" x 38'-4" with the short dimension parallelling the street. The rear wing, the width of the house, extended 18'-1" to the rear.
 2. Foundations: Miscellaneous wood posts and piers constructed with $8\frac{1}{4}" \times 2\frac{1}{4}" \times 4"$ brick support the structure. Brick foundations support the chimney flues. At the original house site there were portions of chimney foundations and piers of an older building under the northwest corner of the Lavalle House.
 3. Wall construction, finish and color: The braced wood frame has mortise and tenon, hewn and sawn members secured with wooden pin and nail fasteners. The end elevations have modern weatherboarding, the front facade has German siding and the rear elevation has beaded weatherboards which were reproduced from several existing original boards. The house is painted a dark, grayed red which is believed to be the original color. The trim was originally a grayed mustard color.
 4. Structural system: The braced wood frame platform system has 5" vertical by 4 $1\frac{1}{8}"$ horizontal roof rafters, 10"v. x 8"h. beams, and 5 $\frac{1}{2}"$ v. x 3 $\frac{1}{2}"$ h. joists. 10"v. x 8"h. sills receive 4 $3\frac{3}{4}" \times 4"$ wall studs, approximately 3'-2" on center, which are infilled with brick nogging. Most of the nogging was removed prior to moving the house and improperly reinstalled. The interior face of the nogging projects beyond the surface of the studding which has necessitated thickening the plaster walls.
 5. Porches: The full length inset porch of the north elevation is recessed under the gable roof. The flush board 10" to 12" ceiling is supported on beaded joists and a beaded beam. Set below the chamfering of the five columns is a simple balustrade with round hand rails, square balusters, and beveled 1" x 4" bottom rails. The original porch extended around the east side of the building and a stairway extended up to a

landing and door into the garret. The original stairs up to the porch would have been on the east side of the porch. Concrete steps and podia of the left center porch bay were abandoned at the old site.

Evidence of a threshold in the east attic floor and the gable framing indicates that there had been an outside entrance to the attic.

6. Chimneys: A pair of chimneys, each serving two fireplaces, project from the front roof slope at the ridge. The chimneys, which were rebuilt after the house was moved, have corbelled brick cap courses.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: There are four doorways between the porch and the front rooms. The simple frames, with an added backband to accommodate the increased thickness of the German siding, are hung with outswinging, four-panel louvered doors. Inswinging glazed doors each have six lights with a wide center muntin over two panels.
 - b. Windows and shutters: On the first floor, each side elevation has six-over-six light sash. The single west attic gable window has six-over-six light sash and the opposite attic gable window has a four-light sash over a one light sash. Typically the sash have narrow muntins and plainly trimmed mortise and tenon frames. Pintles exist for original shutters or blinds.

The rear openings have been temporarily closed.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape and covering: The house has a gable roof which in 1968 was covered with standing seam sheet metal covering. The original roof, protected by the salt box roof of the rear wing had 5" x 18" wood shingles, 7" to the weather. A wood shingled roof was restored to the house in 1969.
- b. Cornice and eaves: The roof over the porch has a slight change in pitch provided by outlookers nailed to the rafters. The eave's fascia and soffit are boxed. Plain barge boards extend up the rakes.

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17-PENSA
13-

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plan: In plan the house has four rooms without hallways. Chimney breasts are located between the front and rear rooms. There is access through doorways in each partition. The attic is one large single space and is reached by a stairway in the southwest room.

The wing, two steps down from the original structure, had a large central space flanked by two rooms on each side.
2. Stairway: The enclosed quarter turn stair with winders at the main floor has $9\frac{1}{2}$ " risers and $8\frac{1}{2}$ " treads. The beaded stringer is exposed with projecting treads. Vertical $10\frac{3}{4}$ " to 12" wide beaded boards, cut around the treads and risers, encloses the well. A closet is under the stair. The 1'-10" wide stairway has no handrail nor header supporting the cut attic floor joists.
3. Flooring: The main floor has random width, 5" to $11\frac{1}{4}$ ", floor boards which are painted and unpainted. The attic floor has $1\frac{1}{4}$ " x 9" to $11\frac{1}{2}$ " tongue and groove floor boards which are unpainted.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: The walls are plastered while the ceilings are exposed undersides of the attic flooring and beaded joists.
5. Doorways and doors: The interior doorways have simple wood trim, flat boarding with beaded inner edges, and are hung with four-panel doors. The closet under the stair has board and batten doors.
6. Decorative features: There is chair rail which is 3" wide with beaded top and bottom edges. The baseboards, $7\frac{3}{4}$ " and $4\frac{1}{2}$ " in height, have a $\frac{3}{8}$ " bead. The window trim is similar to the door frames, which includes having been removed and reset to accommodate the thicker plaster walls. At each of the four fireplaces there is a simple wooden mantelpiece with pilasters supporting a frieze board, a cove moulding and a plain mantelshelf. The fireplaces have cement hearths.
7. Notable hardware: The doors retain cast iron carpenter's locks. There are miscellaneous pieces of wrought iron shutter pintles at the window jambs and at the surviving frames of the rear exterior doors.

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FLA
17-PENSA
13-

8. Mechanical equipment:

- a. Lighting: Fragments of knob and tube wiring were in the house in 1968.
- b. Heating: Of the four closed fireplaces one has a cast iron surround of a coal burning grate apparatus.

D. Site and Surroundings: This structure originally and presently faces north. At the Church Street site there is a frame house directly to the east. A picket fence surrounds the property and encloses within the rear yard the site of an early well which dates before 1820 and is being archeologically investigated.

Prepared by F. Blair Reeves, AIA
HABS--Pensacola
August 15, 1968

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project, sponsored by the Pensacola Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission, now known as the Historic Pensacola Preservation Board of Trustees, in cooperation with the Historic American Buildings Survey, was recorded during the summer of 1968 in Pensacola under the direction of James C. Massey, Chief of HABS; Professor F. Blair Reeves, AIA (University of Florida), Project Supervisor; and Student Assistant Architects John O. Crosby (University of Florida), David L. Van de Ven Jr. (Texas Technological College), and Edward Bondi, Jr. (University of Florida). The historical information was prepared by Professor Samuel Proctor (University of Florida), by Assistant Historian Linda V. Ellsworth (Historic Pensacola Preservation Board), and by Rodd L. Wheaton (Architect, HABS) who edited all the data in 1972.

Addendum to

Charles Lavelle House
Seville Square Historic District
203 East Church Street
Pensacola
Escambia County
Florida

as recorded in 1968 and 1972

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